

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01414 01 OF 03 141535Z

47

ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 CIAE-00 INR-05 PM-03 SP-02

IO-03 SAM-01 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SCCT-01 ACDA-10 L-01 /061 W

----- 097093

R 131435Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8600

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 BEIRUT 1414

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PINS, PINT, PFOR, LE

SUBJECT: THE OUTLOOK FOR LEBANESE ARMED FORCES

REF: STATE 23614 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: LEBANESE ARMY IS ON ITS KNEES, DEMORALIZED BY ITS OWN POOR SHOWING IN JANUARY FIGHTING AND FRAUGHT WITH INTER-COMMUNAL TENSIONS RESULTING FROM LONG PERIOD OF POLITIZATION TO WHICH IT HAS BEEN SUBJECTED. NEVERTHELESS PREMIER KARAME AND SYRIANS HAVE CALLED FOR ITS RECONSTITUTION, AND IT IS TRYING TO PULL ITSELF TOGETHER. THERE IS ROOM FOR SPECULATION ON ULTIMATE INTENTIONS OF SYRIANS AND WHETHER OR NOT THESE MIGHT CLASH WITH CURRENT ATTITUDES OF PLO, LEBANESE CHRISTIANS, LEBANESE MOSLEMS, LEFTISTS AND OTHERS TOWARD TYPE OF ARMY IT SHOULD BE. BY AND LARGE, HOWEVER, THESE POTENTIAL CON-

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 01414 01 OF 03 141535Z

FLICTS ARE LIKELY TO REMAIN MUTED IN THE BEGINNING, AS ARMY

REPRESENTS SYMBOL OF COUNTRY'S REUNIFICATION AND NONE OF THE MAIN POLITICAL ACTORS (WITH EXCEPTION OF THE LEFTISTS) WILL OPPOSE START BEING MADE IN ITS REBUILDING. CHRISTIAN DOMINANCE IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE IN NEAR FUTURE, BUT PROBABLY WITH SOME EARLY PURGING OF INDIVIDUALS IN TOP RANKS.

EQUIPMENT REQUEST FROM ARMY MAY COME SOON, TO MATCH INFORMAL REQUEST WE HAVE ALREADY HAD FROM DIRECTOR GENERAL OF INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES FOR ARMS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT NEEDED BY HIS MUCH MORE DISORGANIZED AND DEMORALIZED ISF FORCES. ANY ARMS PROVIDED IN NEAR FUTURE MIGHT EASILY SLIP INTO WRONG HANDS. THIS FACTOR IS LESS IMPORTANT ON NON-LETHAL SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT. WE CANNOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY SYRIANS MIGHT PROVIDE SOVIET ARMS AND SUPPLIES AS WAY OF DRAWING ARMY CLOSER TO THEMSELVES. NEVERTHELESS IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS TO ATTEMPT INFLUENCE LEBANESE OR SYRIANS IN DIRECTION ARMY RECONSTRUCTION SHOULD TAKE. SO MANY OF THEIR DECISIONS WILL DEPEND ON HOW LOCAL POLITICAL SITUATION DEVELOPS AS WELL AS POLITICAL ALIGNMENTS IN LARGER MIDDLE EASTERN PICTURE. THEREFORE OUR POLICY OF BENEVOLENT NON-INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANESE POLITICAL AFFAIRS SEEMS BEST ATTITUDE TO ADOPT ALSO ON LEBANESE ARMY. WITHIN THAT FRAMEWORK, DECISIONS ON U.S. EQUIPMENT AND OFFERS OF TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES CAN BE MADE AD HOC. END SUMMARY.

A. ARMY'S CONDITION

1. AT THE MOMENT LEBANESE ARMY IS SEVERELY DEMORALIZED AND DISORGANIZED. DATT REPORTING, PARTICULARLY IR 6 857 0010 76 (0082 JAN 76 DTG 311345Z) AND IR 6 857 0011 76 (0083 JAN 76 DTG 020745Z), PROVIDED SOME IDEA OF WIDESPREAD DESERTION, AWOL AND MUTINY PROBLEMS. THESE ARE MORE OBVIOUS IN INFANTRY AND RECONNAISSANCE UNITS WHICH ENGAGED AT CLOSE QUARTERS WITH MOSLEM-PALESTINIAN FORCES AND LESS OBVIOUS IN TANK AND ARTILLERY BATTALIONS. NAVY AND AIR FORCE ARE SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT UNDER THEIR FORMER CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP. HOWEVER, EVEN CENTRAL LEBANESE ARMY HEADQUARTERS HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY CONFESSIONALISM TO EXTENT THAT CHAIN OF COMMAND HAS PRACTICALLY CEASED TO EXIST AND TOP COMMANDERS HAVE RESORTED TO PASSING ORDERS DIRECTLY TO UNITS AS SMALL AS PLATOONS.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 01414 01 OF 03 141535Z

2. EVEN MORE SERIOUS SITUATION EXISTS IN INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES (PARTICULARLY GENDARMERIE) WHICH PLAYED ALMOST NO SECURITY ROLE IN PAST FEW MONTHS AND HAS IN EFFECT CEASED TO EXIST EXCEPT AS AN ORGANIZATION OF RELATIVELY UNARMED MEN DIVIDED FOR THE MOST PART INTO CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM GROUPS WHICH DO NOT CONFORM TO THEIR PREVIOUS, MIXED UNIT DIVISIONS. INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES LOST EVEN MORE OF THEIR ARMS THAN DID THE ARMY, AND THE LOSS IN BOTH CASES WAS VERY CONSIDER-

ABLE THOUGH WE DO NOT HAVE FIGURES AT THIS TIME.

3. ARMY HAS BEEN GRADUALLY POLITICIZED OVER PAST FEW MONTHS, A PROCESS WHICH HAS NOT YET BEEN REVERSED. PART OF THIS CAN NO DOUBT BE ATTRIBUTED TO FACT IT WAS NOT USED AS AN ENTITY UNTIL THE VERY END IN JANUARY, WHEN IT WAS NO LONGER ABLE TO FUNCTION AS SUCH. PIECEMEAL COMMITMENT OF ARMY FORCES TO SUPPLEMENT LOW-MORALE ISF IN MAINTAINING SECURITY OF AREAS OF BEIRUT AND OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY HAD AN ERODING EFFECT ON ESPRIT DE CORPS. THEIR DEFEAT AND DIS-ILLUSIONMENT FOLLOWED IN MOST CASES (THERE WERE EXCEPTIONS) WHEN ARMY UNITS CAME UP AGAINST TOUGH PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ARMY (PLA) FORCES AND THEIR MOSLEM-FEDAYEEN ALLIES.

4. AT SAME TIME CHRISTIAN-MOSLEM CONFRONTATIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY EVENTUALLY PERMEATED ARMY, AKND WIDESPREAD DESERTIONS OCCURRED WHENEVER MIXED ARMY UNITS WENT UP AGAINST MOSLEM-PALESTINIAN FORCES IN JANUARY. REBELLIOUS YOUNG LT. KHATIB, WHO DESERTED WITH A SMALL NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS FROM HIS POSITION IN THE SOUTH AND WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR SOME OF THE MUTINIES THAT TOOK PLACE, HAS BECOME A SYMBOL FOR THE MOSLEMS OF DISSATISFACTION WITH CONTINUING CONTROL OF THE ARMY BY THE CHRISTIANS. KHATIB REMAINS AT LARGE IN THE BEKAA AND MAY RECENTLY HAVE BEEN JOINED BY A FEW MORE DISSIDENT MOSLEM OFFICERS AND TROOPS. THIS ISSUE IS MUTED AT PRESENT BUT WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO BE FACED BEFORE ARMY CAN AGAIN BECOME THE UNIFIED NON-CONFESSIONAL FORCE IT ONCE WAS YEARS AGO. WE HAVE TO EXPRESS SERIOUS DOUBTS FROM OUR PRESENT PERSPECTIVE THAT CHRISTIANS WOULD MAKE ANY IMPORTANT CONCESSION IN THIS MATTER ANY TIME SOON. IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH CONCESSION, MOSLEM SUBORDINATES WILL FOR THE MOST PART REMAIN UNDER SUSPICION AND RETURN SUCH SUSPICION. FURTHERMORE, THE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 01414 01 OF 03 141535Z

GOL AMNESTY GRANTED DESERTERS IN JANUARY SETS A PRECEDENT OF GOL FORMAL APPROVAL FOR DESERTION AND MUTINY IF DONE FOR THE RIGHT (I.E., COMMUNAL) REASONS. THIS OF COURSE LIMITS UTILITY OF THE ARMY FOR INTERNAL SECURITY ASSIGNMENTS. WE COULD VISUALIZE ARMY BEING EFFECTIVE IN FUTURE AGAINST NON-LEBANSE ELEMENTS BUT ONLY IF MODERATE MOSLEMS WERE NOT IN ALLIANCE WITH THOSE ELEMENTS.

5. PRIME MINISTER KARAME AND SYRIAN LEADERSHIP HAVE CALLED FOR THE RECONSTITUTION OF A NATIONAL ARMY AS THE VEHICLE FOR OBTAINING NATIONAL UNITY IN THE FUTURE. THE MARONITE CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONTINUES TO CALL FOR RETURN OF THE COUNTRY TO SECURITY AND "NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY." LEBANESE ARMY UNDER PREDOMINANTLY CHRISTIAN CONTROL, IS THE ONLY VEHICLE IN SIGHT FOR SUCH SECURITY AND NA-

TIONAL SOVEREIGNTY IF ONE RULES OUT THE PALESTINIANS, THEK
SYRIANS AND THE MILITIAS ON BOTH CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM
SIDES. THUS A POTENTIAL CONFLICT EXISTS BETWEEN THE KARAME-
SYRIAN HOPES FOR A (MORE REPRESENTATIVE) NATIONAL ARMY
AND THE RIGHTIST CHRISTIAN MARONITE
IDEA OF WHO SHOULD
CONTROL THAT ARMY. THIS CONFLICT IS ESSENTIALLY POLITI-
CAL AND FURTHER POLITICIZES THE ARMY LEADERSHIP. IT
RAISES SERIOUS PROBABILITY THAT SOME PURGES OF TOP
ARMY OFFICERS WILL COME IN NOT-TOO-DISTANT FUTURE--AS
WAY OF GIVING SOME SATISFACTION TO MOSLEMS WITHOUT CED-
ING CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP AT THE TOP.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01414 02 OF 03 131727Z

47

ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 CIAE-00 INR-05 PM-03 SP-02

IO-03 SAM-01 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SCCT-01 ACDA-10 L-01 /061 W

----- 075889

R 131435Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8601

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 3 BEIRUT 1414

LIMDIS

B. ATTITUDES OF VARIOUS PARTIES

6. THE PRESENT ATTITUDE OF THE PLO SEEMS FAIRLY CLEAR.

IT WOULD BE WILLING TO LIVE WITH A RECONSTITUTED ARMY UNDER

NOMINAL CHRISTIAN CONTROL ARMED WITH WEAPONS SUITED
PRIMARILY TO INTERNAL SECURITY MISSIONS. PLO FEARS ARMY'S
POSSESSION OF HEAVY WEAPONS (AND AN AIR FORCE), AND IT IS
PRETTY EVIDENT THAT PLO (WHICH HAS PROTECTED DEFECTOR LT.
KHATIB) WILL ATTEMPT TO INSURE MOSLEM ELEMENT OF ARMY
WILL NOT GO ALONG WITH REPRESSION OF MOSLEMS OR PALES-
TINIANS IN THE FUTURE. PLO SAYS IT IS PREPARED TO RETURN
TO THE CAIRO AND MELKART AGREEMENTS, PARTICULARLY AS THEY
APPLY TO ARMED PALESTINIANS REMAINING ONLY IN THEIR CAMPS
OR OTHER AGREED AREAS, BUT PLO IS QUITE CLEARLY NOT PRE-
PARED TO GIVE UP ITS HEAVY ARMAMENT OR TO DEPEND ON LEB-
ANESE ARMY AND ISF TO PROTECT PALESTINIAN POPULATION
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 01414 02 OF 03 131727Z

FROM ISRAELI ATTACK.

7. SYRIAN AIMS ARE MORE VEILED. SOME REPORTING WE ARE
SEEING INDICATES SYRIANS MAY HAVE IN MIND DEVELOPMENT
OF ARMY WHICH WILL COOPERATE CLOSELY WITH SYRIA AGAINST
POTENTIAL ISRAEL ATTACK, AND WHICH WILL TOLERATE, OR EVEN
ASSIST, SYRIAN EFFORTS TO GAIN GREATER CONTROL OVER THE
PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT. ALONG THIS LINE, WE NOTE PETER
GILL IN A RECENT "DAILY TELEGRAPH" (JAN 28) ARTICLE SUG-
GESTED SYRIANS ULTIMATELY HAVE IN MIND INTEGRATION OF
LEBANESE ARMY INTO JOINT MILITARY COMMAND WITH SYRIA
AND JORDAN. IF THIS ALLEGED SYRIAN AMBITION HAS A BASIS IN
FACT, SYRIANS WOULD BE PUSHING FOR ARMY LEADERSHIP THEY
COULD WORK WITH AND BE PREPARED TO ENVISAGE ARMING LEB-
ANESE WITH HEAVIER WEAPONS THAN PLO WOULD DESIRE. (I
PERSONALLY BELIEVE THE TOP SYRIANS THEMSELVES RECOGNIZE
ANY SUCH AMBITION WOULD BE UNREALISTIC, SINCE
CHRISTIAN RIGHT-WING ELEMENTS IN ANY ARMY WOULD NOT
AGREE TO CONFRONTATION AND WOULD MAKE UNRELIABLE ALLIES
FOR THE SYRIANS.) ON PRESENT EVIDENCE AT LEAST, SYRIANS
SEEM PREPARED TO COUNTENANCE REBUILT LEBANESE ARMY
UNDER CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP WHICH WILL PACIFY CHRISTIAN
POPULATION AND THEIR MILITIAS.

8. LEBANESE MOSLEM VIEWS OF THE ARMY ARE ALSO TO SOME
DEGREE CONTRADICTIONARY. WHILE CONSERVATIVES SUCH AS PRIME
MINISTER KARAME MIGHT BE WILLING TO VISUALIZE A LEBA-
NESE ARMY ALONG TRADITIONAL LINES WITH PERHAPS SOMEWHAT
GREATER CONSERVATIVE MOSLEM INFLUENCE UNDER MARONITE
COMMANDER, LEFT-WING FORCES GENERALLY OPPOSE THE
ARMY ALONG TRADITIONAL LINES. SUCH FORCES VIEW ARMY AS A RE-
PRESSIVE INSTRUMENT AIMED PRIMARILY AT THEMSELVES. THEY
SEE IT AS CONTINUING THREAT TO THEIR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES,
ONE WHICH ENFORCES THEIR RELIANCE ON PALESTINIAN AND/OR
SYRIAN FORCES FOR PROTECTION, SOMETHING A DRUZE LEADER
SUCH AS JUMBLATT FINDS DISTASTEFUL AND PALESTINIAN RE-

JECTIONISTS OR THE LOCAL COMMUNIST PARTY WOULD FIND POSITIVELY DANGEROUS. PERHAPS HAPPILY, THE LEFT-WING MOSLEM VIEWS ARE THOSE LEAST IMPORTANT IN THE CURRENT POWER LINEUP HERE. HOWEVER, THEY HAVE AN INFLUENCE ON OTHER ELEMENTS INVOLVED, PARTICULARLY SHOULD THERE LATER
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 01414 02 OF 03 131727Z

BE A PARTING OF THE WAYS ON THE ISSUE OF THE ARMY BETWEEN THE PLO AND THE SYRIANS.

C. THE IMMEDIATE PROSPECT

9. FOR THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, INCIPIENT DIFFERENCES OF APPROACH NEED NOT COME INTO THE OPEN. LEBANESE ARMY IS AT PRESENT SO WEAK THAT SYRIANS, PLO AND CONSERVATIVE LEBANESE MOSLEMS PROBABLY AGREE TO RE-CONSTITUTION OF THE ARMY WITHOUT ATTEMPTING ANY EXTENSIVE IMMEDIATE PURGE OF ITS MIXED CHRISTIAN-MOSLEM HIERARCHY. THE ARMY COULD ALSO ACQUIRE MORE SMALL ARMS, UNIFORMS, TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT, AND SOME OTHER ITEMS IT HAS LOST IN RECENT FIGHTING WITHOUT RAISING SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT ITS ULTIMATE MISSION.

10. WE BELIEVE THIS IS THE KIND OF THING THE SYRIANS AND CONSERVATIVE MOSLEMS SUCH AS PRIME MINISTER KARAME HAVE IN MIND AT PRESENT. TO DO THIS THEY WILL REQUIRE THE CONTINUING COOPERATION OF THE CHRISTIAN OFFICER HIERARCHY AND THOSE CHRISTIAN POLITICAL LEADERS WHO HAVE INFLUENCE WITH THE ARMY HIERARCHY. BY THE SAME TOKEN THEY WILL HAVE TO PACIFY THE LEBANESE MOSLEM LEFT AND BE SURE THE CHRISTIAN OFFICER HIERARCHY DOES NOT REPRESS MOSLEMS WHO DESERTED TO THE OTHER SIDE OR SIMPLY WERE INACTIVE IN THE RECENT FIGHTING.

11. THUS IT IS NOT REALISTIC TO TALK OF THE ARMY LEADING THE WAY TO NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. RATHER THE PROCESS WILL BE THE REVERSE, OR AT BEST BOTH THINGS WILL HAVE TO HAPPEN TOGETHER, AND PERHAPS REINFORCE EACH OTHER. ONCE THAT IS CLEARLY REALIZED BY ALL CONCERNED, THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM WILL SINK IN AND (WE HOPE) EFFORTS WILL BE MADE TO SOLVE IT. MEANWHILE "RECONSTITUTION OF THE ARMY" SERVES AS A RELATIVELY INNOCUOUS SLOGAN AND A USEFUL ILLUSION AT A MOMENT IN LEBANESE HISTORY WHEN THERE ARE PRECIOUS FEW SYMBOLS OF NATIONAL UNITY TO WHICH THE GOL LEADERSHIP CAN APPEAL.

D. RE-EQUIPMENT PROBLEM

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 01414 02 OF 03 131727Z

12. THE PROBLEM THE LEBANESE WILL FACE VERY SOON IS RE-EQUIPMENT OF THE ARMY. THOUGH IT WAS NOT STRIPPED OF PRACTICALLY ALL ITS WEAPONRY AS WERE THE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES, THE ARMY HAD CONSIDERABLE LOSSES BOTH IN SMALL WEAPONS AND LARGER EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES DURING THE FIGHTING. HOWEVER, ANY DECISION ON RE-EQUIPMENT ALSO COMES UP AGAINST THE QUESTION OF HOW LARGE THE ARMY SHOULD BE. COUNCIL OF MINISTERS RECENTLY DECIDED TO PROCEED WITH NEW ARMY REORGANIZATION IN THE ABSENCE OF A FUNCTIONING PARLIAMENT. THIS WOULD IMPLY INTENTION TO LAUNCH A DRAFT AIMED AT AN ARMY OF 40,000. THE REASON FOR THE DRAFT HAS BEEN THAT POORER CHRISTIAN BOYS HAVE NOT SOUGHT VOLUNTEER ENLISTMENT IN THE ARMY, THUS ALLOWING THE ARMY TO TAKE THE FORM OF MOSLEMS IN THE LOWER RANKS AND CHRISTIANS IN THE HIGHER, AS WELL AS LIMITING ITS EXPANSION.

13. IDEA OF LARGER ARMY, HOWEVER, IS BOUND TO RUN INTO PRACTICAL PROBLEMS. ITS RECRUITS WOULD FOR THE MOST PART COME FROM CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM MILITA, WHO HAVE SO BEEN FIGHTING EACH OTHER. ALTHOUGH THIS IS A LAUDABLE (AND PERHAPS THE ONLY VIABLE) SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF PRIVATE MILITIAS, POLITICAL CONSENSUS WOULD HAVE TO BE ESTABLISHED AND LAST SOME MONTHS BEFORE SUCH REORGANIZATION COULD BE EFFECTED. MEANWHILE, SOME INFLUENTIAL SENIOR OFFICERS ARE TALKING ABOUT A SMALL ARMY OF ONLY 3,000 HARD-CORE PROFESSIONALS. THIS TOO HAS ITS PROBLEMS. IF IT WERE ORGANIZED PRIMARILY BY CHRISTIAN OFFICERS IT WOULD BE OPEN TO SUSPICION AS JUST A TOUGHER KIND OF CHRISTIAN MILITIA. IF ORGANIZED AMONG INTER-COMMUNAL LINES, IT WOULD SUFFER FROM THE SAME PROBLEMS OF DISUNITY AND LOW MORALE UNTIL POLITICAL SETTLEMENT BETWEEN COUNTRY'S COMMUNITIES MADE BETTER PROGRESS. THE ONE PRACTICAL ADVANTAGE OF SMALLER ARMY WOULD BE LESS IMMEDIATE NEED FOR EQUIPMENT. THE DISADVANTAGES WOULD BE ITS INABILITY TO KEEP THE PEACE INTERNALLY (EXCEPT PERHAPS IF IT WERE ENTIRELY CONCENTRATED ON CHRISTIAN AREAS OF THE COUNTRY) ALONG WITH ITS SHORTCOMINGS IN A ROLE OF EXTERNAL DEFENSE

14. THIS BEING THE LEBANON, MOST LIKELY GOL COURSE WILL BE TO SEIZE WHAT RESOURCES APPEAR READILY AT HAND AND
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 BEIRUT 01414 02 OF 03 131727Z

SEE HOW FAR THEY GO. THUS IT IS LIKELY THAT SOME INTERNAL REORGANIZATION ALONG MORE HARD-CORE PROFESSIONAL LINES WILL BE AUTHORIZED WHILE COUNTRY TRIES TO MOVE AT A NATURAL PACE

TOWARD GOAL OF LARGE DRAFTEE ARMY. IMMEDIATE RE-EQUIPPING
WOULD STRIKE A MID-POINT, CONCENTRATING PRIMARILY ON TROOPS
PRESENTLY UNDER COLORS. WE DOUBT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO
RECOVER MUCH LOST EQUIPMENT, APART FROM FEW
HEAVY ITEMS. THUS
NEW ITEMS WOULD BE ORDERED FROM ABROAD.

15. SYRIAN ATTITUDE TOO, WE SUSPECT, IS LIKELY TO BE REALIS-
TIC. IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT SYRIANS WILL PURSUE ANY
SPECIFIC LONG-TERM AIM UNTIL THEY SEE WHAT THE REALISTIC
OPTIONS ARE. LATTER WILL DEPEND ON EXTENT OF CHRISTIAN
COOPERATION IN REBUILDING POLITICAL CONSENSUS AND TONING
DOWN POTENTIAL FOR DE FACTO PARTITION WHICH HAS BEEN GROW-
ING THROUGH THIS CONFLICT. THUS, SYRIANS
MIGHT AT FIRST GO ALONG WITH IDEA OF AN ARMY RECONSITUTED
WITH FORMER CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP, KEEPING THEIR OPTIONS
OPEN FOR LATER

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01414 03 OF 03 131641Z

47

ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 CIAE-00 INR-05 PM-03 SP-02

IO-03 SAM-01 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SCCT-01 ACDA-10 L-01 /061 W

----- 074926

R 131435Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8602

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 3 OF 3 BEIRUT 1414

LIMDIS

E. THE U.S. ROLE

16. THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES HAS ALREADY MADE AN INFORMAL REQUEST FOR U.S. GRANT ASSISTANCE. HE HAS BEEN TOLD BY DATT THAT HIS INFORMAL REQUEST WOULD BE FORWARDED TO WASHINGTON BUT WOULD PROBABLY BE TURNED DOWN AS IT MUST COME THROUGH FORMAL CHANNELS. I AGREE IT SHOULD BE DONE FORMALLY HERE OR IN WASHINGTON. A SIMILAR REQUEST FROM LEBANESE ARMY WOULD NOT SURPRISE US IN NEAR FUTURE. OUR INITIAL REPLY WOULD HAVE TO BE THE SAME. BEYOND THAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER WHAT WE MIGHT GIVE IN NEAR FUTURE, PROVIDED RELEASE OF KIDNAPPED DIPLOMATS GALLAGHER AND DYKES HAD TAKEN PLACE BY THEN. THIS NEED NOT BE GRANT AID, BUT WILL PROBABLY INVOLVE CONCESSIONARY TERMS OF SOME KIND. NON-LETHAL EQUIPMENT SUCH AS UNIFORMS, COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES WOULD SEEM
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 01414 03 OF 03 131641Z

APPROPRIATE AT ALMOST ANYTIME. INTENTION WOULD BE TO HELP SHORE UP ARMY AND ISF MORALE AND RENEW LINKS OF USG FRIENDSHIP WHICH WERE STRAINED ON CHRISTIAN SIDE BY OUR NON-INVOLVEMENT IN RECENT CRISIS. IT IS TOO EARLY, IN OUR ESTIMATION, TO PROVIDE SMALL ARMS OR HEAVY EQUIPMENT. AT PRESENT SUCH EQUIPMENT MIGHT EASILY BE TAKEN AWAY FROM THE ARMY AND ISF BY RIGHTIST CHRISTIANS BY PLA AND PALESTINIANS OR BY DISSIDENT ARMY MOSLEMS. THIS IS MAIN REASON WE RECOMMEND DELAYING SHIPMENT OF REMAINING TWO MISSILES AND LAUNCHERS DUE END OF JANUARY. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT WOULD NOT BE INAPPROPRIATE, IF SECURITY SITUATION CONTINUES TO IMPROVE, FOR U.S. FIRMS TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS TO PROVIDE EQUIPMENT AT SOMEWHAT DISTANT FUTURE. WE SHOULD THINK ONE YEAR FROM NOW WOULD BE THE MINIMUM. THIS RECOMMENDATION WILL BE REVIEWED FROM TIME TO TIME.

17. A FACTOR WE MUST ALL KEEP IN MIND IS TEMPTATION ON SYRIAN SIDE TO PROVIDE SOME SOVIET ARMS TO LEBANESE AS WAY OF ALIGNING THEIR OFFICERS CLOSER TO SYRIAN POLICY. WE REALIZE OF COURSE THIS IS A LONG-SHOT AND WOULD DEPEND ON WHAT PLANS SYRIANS DEVELOPED FOR LEBANESE ARMY AS TIME WENT BY. BUT IT IS A POSSIBILITY WE CANNOT RULE OUT.

18. NEVERTHELESS, IT WOULD SEEM DANGEROUS FROM SEVERAL POINTS OF VIEW (WHICH WE NEED NOT DETAIL HERE) FOR USG TO ATTEMPT INFLUENCE LEBANESE OR SYRIANS IN KEY DECISION ABOUT THE SIZE AND CHARACTER OF LEBANESE ARMY. BESIDES, AS WE NOTE ABOVE, LEBANESE AND SYRIANS ARE LIKELY TO PLAY THIS BY EAR ANYWAY' THEY

WILL ENLARGE ARMY TO EXTENT POLITICAL RECONCILIATION PERMITS.
ARMY WILL BE DEPENDABLE (AND THEREFORE ABLE TO HOLD ON TO
ITS EQUIPMENT) TO EXTENT CHRISTIAN-MOSLEM RIFT IS
HEALED. ARMY WILL BE PERMITTED ADDITIONAL HEAVY WEAPONS TO
EXTENT SYRIANS (AND PERHAPS PALESTINIANS) REALLY DE-
SIRE AN EXPANDED ROLE FOR LEBANESE ARMY A YEAR FROM
NOW OR LATER AND TO EXTENT GOL AND LEBANESE CHRISTIANS
COOPERATE AT SUCH FUTURE TIME. THUS OUR POLICY OF BENE-
VOLENT NON-INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANESE POLITICAL AFFAIRS
SEEMS TO EMBASSY BEST ATTITUDE TO ADOPT ALSO TOWARDS
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 01414 03 OF 03 131641Z

THE LEBANESE ARMY AND ITS SYRIAN-LEBANESE BUILDERS.
WITHIN THAT FRAMEWORK, SPECIFIC DECISIONS ON MORE U.S.
EQUIPMENT AND INCREASED U.S. TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES CAN
BE MADE AS REQUESTS OR OPPORTUNITIES ARISE.
LAMBRAKIS

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMED FORCES, REORGANIZATIONS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BEIRUT01414
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760057-0642
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760253/aaaabtrq.tel
Line Count: 514
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 10
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 76 STATE 23614
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 JAN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 JAN 2004 by morefirh>; APPROVED <11 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE OUTLOOK FOR LEBANESE ARMED FORCES
TAGS: MASS, PINS, PINT, PFOR, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006